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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0172  
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY 0874  
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0721  
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0375  
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 0408

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAKAR 000904

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, INL, INR/AA AND S/P - M.JAMES  
ACCRA ALSO FOR WARP  
LAGOS ALSO FOR DEA  
LISBON ALSO FOR DAO  
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [SNAR](#) [SG](#) [PU](#) [US](#)  
SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: COURTING U.S. AND OTHERS WITH  
REFORM AGENDA

REF: A. DAKAR 0835 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)B. DAKAR 0831 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) In a March 29-31 visit, then Charge and PolOff saw a Guinea-Bissau that is oriented toward courting international donors and investors and implementing a domestic agenda that reflects the top priorities of UN, European and U.S. interests. The government's priority is security sector reform, but it also is putting a strong emphasis on counternarcotics with the creation of a task force; stricter control of public financing and anti-corruption with several high-level officials under investigation; increasing cashew exports and oil exploration; and improving public institutions, especially the judiciary. The GOGB is hoping the big payoffs will come at a mini-roundtable for security sector reform tentatively planned for this summer, a larger donors conference in the fall, and a much desired re-opening of the U.S. Embassy. END SUMMARY.

&U.S., PLEASE COME BACK8

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[1](#)2. (C) Almost every person then Charge and PolOff met, including the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, business community, foreign diplomats and others, delivered a common message: the United States should re-open its embassy in Bissau. The Prime Minister put it most eloquently when he said he appreciated the USD 2.2 million in U.S. assistance, but we could keep it all if we would just re-open the Embassy. Most observers view a U.S. permanent presence as a vote of confidence in the stability of the country -- one international donors and investors will take seriously.

FRANCE CONCENTRATING ON FRENCH LANGUAGE; PORTUGAL DOING LITTLE

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[1](#)3. (C) During a meeting with the French Ambassador, she stressed that one third of French assistance is devoted to teaching French. Indeed, the Franco-Guinean Cultural Center is large and active. When asked if the Portuguese see the French as competitors, she said she believed they did. She also observed that Portugal is providing little assistance and does not seem to have any strategy for dealing with its former colony beyond working through the Community of

Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), which will hold a summit in Bissau in July.

#### STABILITY IN CHECK FOR NOW

14. (C) Since the Prime Minister's policy program was approved by the National Popular Assembly (ANP) last month, questions over government viability have waned but tensions between a faction of the Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the ruling coalition have not. The current war of words is being staged over the Senegalese border conflict, with some PAIGC leaders calling for an end to the military campaign against Salif Sadio's Atika wing of the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC) and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Tagme na Waie threatening some ANP members with imprisonment for alleged support of rebels (Ref A).

15. (C) The question of political stability is playing out primarily in the ANP, which raises the profile and importance of the U.S.-sponsored training program run by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Assembly members Serifo Nhamadjo, Chairman of the Administration Committee, and Joao Perreiro Nandigna, Chairman of the Security Committee told Charge and PolOff the program is well run and much appreciated by members of various political parties and backgrounds. Foreign Minister Monteiro expressed gratitude for the NDI project and said he hopes similar assistance will be available for the executive and judicial branches. He believes a thriving private sector can only be developed in tandem with a responsible and efficient public sector.

16. (C) UNOGBIS also works with the ANP on conflict

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resolution and coordinates with NDI. Since 1999, UNOGBIS, mandate has been to promote national reconciliation and presidential and legislative elections, but it is planning to close at the end of 2006. UNOGBIS Representative Joao Honwana said there is more work to be done on two fronts: institutionalizing peaceful resolution of conflicts and security sector reform. He has told the Government it needs to be magnanimous in victory and reach out to the disaffected PAIGC members.

#### PRESIDENT WORRIED ABOUT ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

17. (C) President Vieira told Charge and PolOff about various illicit activities in the area of the Bijagos Archipelago. He said boats from neighboring countries were raiding Guinea-Bissau's rich fishing waters and noted that some are also carrying illicit drugs and arms. Press reported that Bissau-Guinean authorities interdicted 30 pirogues (small fishing boats) from Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau in addition to ten larger vessels from North Korea and China, which were poaching fish. Oil exploration is increasing in the same waters, which prompted Vieira to request U.S. assistance to prepare for a possible windfall should sufficient deposits be found (Ref B).

18. (C) Drug traffickers through West Africa continue to be bold. Customs authorities in Senegal seized more than eight tons of marijuana valued at USD 44.4 million in a container in the port of Dakar. However, narcotics traffickers through West Africa are known to favor Guinea-Bissau as a transit point from Latin America to Europe because of the ease with which they can operate in the territorial waters with little or no surveillance. In fact, drug trafficking may be killing what little licit commerce Guinea-Bissau has. Former U.S. Ambassador John Blacken says the only fish processing plant that met European export standards is now being used solely as a drug warehouse. The GOGB continues to request assistance from the USG and other international donors for boats, vehicles, and communications equipment to improve enforcement of drug trafficking and illegal fishing.

¶9. (C) The GOGB focus in recent months on strengthening the rule of law, improving enforcement of transnational crimes, and tackling corruption has highlighted the need for a prison. Existing holding cells are inadequate in number, security, and living conditions to house all prisoners. The GOGB gave PolOff an unsolicited request for a USD 6.4 million (3.4 billion CFA Francs) proposal to construct the country's first maximum-security prison. Currently, perpetrators of all but the worst crimes are released after a few days due to lack of space. Then Charge discouraged GOGB thinking that the U.S. might fund prison construction, but the need is real.

COMMENT

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¶10. (C) The NDI program is making important inroads to increasing dialogue and refocusing parliamentarians toward good governance and away from power struggles. The program has revealed serious structural problems such as a lack of advisors, no research capability and no links to civil society, but these problems cannot be addressed before the program expires in September. NDI is looking for funding for Qase two, which includes multi-media-based training for illiterate parliamentarians (thought to be about 60 percent), a student intern program, and linking committees with relevant NGOs. They are cooperating closely with the Government of Brazil.

¶11. (C) Recent busts of illegal fishing and drug couriers and fines which may run up to USD one million for fish poaching indicate the GOGB is acting on the U.S. message of showing what it can do with the limited resources it has. We have also urged officials to pass tougher laws on counternarcotics, asset forfeiture, and money laundering and are providing some sample legislation. If stability is maintained through 2006, the Department should strongly consider re-opening the embassy in Bissau. Counternarcotics, potential oil wealth and an interest in keeping the fragile

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state in the &win8 column on democratic governance  
necessitate permanent representation. END COMMENT.  
JACOBS